

Making A Difference

National CASA Holds Rural Initiative Meeting In Columbus, Indiana

The National CASA Association chose Columbus, Indiana as the site for a Rural Initiative Meeting March 19-21, 2002. Representatives from 41 states were in attendance at the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to learn about and discuss issues that are common to CASA programs located in rural areas. After a welcome from NCASAA CEO Michael Piraino, a survey report on the rural strengths, weaknesses and challenges were presented by NCASAA staff Jose Sahagun and Terene Ben-

nett. The report was in response to surveys sent to those of you in Indiana (and across the nation) who are directors of rural programs.

Breakout sessions included these topics: Board Development for Rural CASA Programs, Dealing With Limited Services and Resources In Rural Areas and Volunteer Recruitment and Retention. Sessions on stress management and fundraising strategies and sustainability were also held. National CASA is very aware that programs lo-

cated in rural areas face very different situations and hurdles than those programs located in metropolitan areas. Often times, it is harder to recruit volunteers. Services and resources may be miles away instead of right in your area. This may cause transportation and safety issues.

The rural initiative is an ongoing project with NCASAA. Watch for more opportunities to learn how to better manage your rural program.

GAL/CASA

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Coming Events:

- ☉ Regional Training Sessions Statewide During the Month of June
- ☉ Train-The-Trainer Dates set for August 13-15 at the Hyatt Regency in Indianapolis
- ☉ Annual Director's Meeting and 6th Annual State Conference November 1-2 in Indianapolis

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Legislative Committee to Offer Regional Training Sessions In June

During the month of June, members of the Legislative Committee (which is an extension of the State GAL/CASA Advisory Board) will offer training sessions in all four regions of the state. Their goal is

to assist GAL/CASA directors in learning how to talk to their legislators about children's issues and GAL/CASA in Indiana. Watch your mail for times, dates and places in regard to this training.

Many of you have already been contacted by the commission members in your regions as to how to get the process started... by writing letters. We hope that as many of you as possible will attend.

What Does Jessie Know?

I advocate for Jessie. She is now ten and has been diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome, shaken baby syndrome, is mildly mentally retarded and classified as a "special Needs Child". Parental rights have been terminated and we are now searching for an adoptive home for Jessie. During a meeting someone asked me if I thought Jessie was aware of the problems she has. They asked, "What does Jessie know?" After thinking about this question, here is my answer:

Jessie knows loss, pain and tragedy– but, Jessie knows that music makes you dance - and singing loud feels good,
That dogs make good pillows and kittens should be kissed.
Jessie knows that grass is to roll on, and sometimes to chew.
Jessie knows that friends should be hugged - and everyone deserves a smile.
Jessie knows that she wants a "forever family" and a purple bedroom.
Jessie knows that chocolate is good for you - and twirling fast in circles is fun.
Jessie knows that you must be gentle with babies - and horses like to hear
Secrets when you whisper in their ear.
Jessie knows that flowers shouldn't always be in gardens - the bright ones
Belong behind your ears - and sometimes if you are tired of answering questions,
a good burp may bring silence and giggles.
Jessie knows how to give love and ask nothing in return - and that being warm is good.

Jessie knows the name of every child that has ever been in a classroom with her, and she is never wrong.
Jessie knows when she sees them out shopping and yells at them across the mall, they turn, whisper and walk away.
Jessie knows how to dress for church - she knows that God likes purple and red together and she's pretty sure He doesn't care if your shoes are tied.

Perhaps, someday I'll be graced with the wisdom to know - all that Jessie knows.

Judy O'Neill
CASA

LIGHT OF HOPE EVENT HELD IN MORGAN COUNTY



Director Kelly Bray of the Morgan County CASA Program once again organized a Light of Hope event to make the public aware of the reality of child abuse not only in Morgan County, but across our State. In 2001, there were 45 fatalities in Indiana, 26 from abuse and 19 from Neglect; 2 of those victims were from Morgan County. 33 of the victims were 3 years of age or younger. In 2000, 44 children lost their lives due to abuse and neglect in Indiana. Pictured here, Indiana State GAL/CASA Director Nancy Gettinger, J.D. and Morgan County CASA Director Kelly Bray (second and third from the left) pose with CASA supporters at the event. The event was well attended, and left a lasting impression on the community.

What Is GAL/CASA News in YOUR County?

What is going on with YOUR GAL/CASA Program? Did you sponsor a special event? Did one of your volunteers do something absolutely awesome? Did you just graduate a new group of CASA volunteers? No matter what the



news we want to know about it, and we want to write about it right here in our quarterly newsletter! We know that you are proud of the job your volunteers are doing and we are, too. Now, let's tell Everyone about it! Just

submit your articles and/or pictures to Teresa Christopher at the State Office Of GAL/CASA. You can call her at (800) 542-0813. You can email her at tchristo@courts.state.in.us. You can also mail your stories to Teresa at: State Office of GAL/CASA, 115 West Washington, Suite 1080, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

Spending Time With Your CASA Kids

When is the last time you took time to really take in your surroundings? Have you given thought recently to how important it is to you that you have other people in your life to share your joys, fears and frustrations with? Well, the same is true for the CASA kids we advocate for and with. Warm weather is upon us here in the Midwest. Along with that comes base-

ball games, school programs and just taking time to lay on your back and see rabbits and dinosaurs formed by the clouds.

Be sure that your CASA kid is seeing you more than just in the courtroom. Go to their homes or foster homes to see them. Find out



Take time to make time...be the face in the crowd that they see.

if they are involved in activities and take time out to be that face in the crowd that they see. Take time to make time for these precious children...it may just mean the world to them. You ARE an important someone in their lives!

Preparations Have Begun For 6th Annual State Conference

The meeting space has been reserved. We are already talking about themes, session topics, and keynote speakers. That's right! We are getting ready once again for the Indiana Annual State GAL/CASA Conference. Be sure to set aside **Friday, November 1st for GAL/CASA Directors and Staff, and Saturday, November 2nd for your**

staff and volunteers to attend the conference!

As has been the case in the past, we are looking to you for suggestions for breakout sessions, as well as speakers. Call or email us with your ideas today! What are issues or topics that are important to you and your CASA program? Are you

willing to present at a breakout session? Have you heard a dynamic speaker that would be perfect for the conference? Do tell!

We want and need your input! This is YOUR conference! Share your thoughts and ideas with us

National CASA To Host Train-The-Trainer Event In Indiana

On August 13-15, 2002, National CASA will be hosting a Train-The-Trainer Session for GAL/CASA directors and staff on the use of the new NCASAA curriculum at the Hyatt in Indianapolis. The current curriculum was released last summer, replacing a version that had previously been in use for years. The updated version is extremely

user-friendly, and addresses all of the major topics of training in regard to abuse and neglect advocacy. There are a few revisions that have been implemented since last year, and they will be discussed at the training session.

Those in attendance will also learn how to be better facilitators as

they put the new curriculum to use. You will leave the training better equipped and excited about your next training class. Watch for a registration form in the mail soon! The training is free, but you will be responsible for your travel, lodging and some meals. Rooms should be available at the government rate at the Hyatt and other hotels.